



BILLBOARDS (1990, R2001)

Policy Statement

The American Society of Landscape Architects urges the control and/or removal of existing billboards, the regulation of new billboards so that the visual quality of their surroundings is not diminished, and the strong local regulation of remaining signage, including on-premise signs.

Rationale

Billboards are located so as to maximize their exposure to passing motorists and pedestrians; unlike print and electronic advertising they are placed so as to offer the intended audience no option other than to view their content. They deface nearby scenery in both the natural and built environment, rural and urban, and unlike other forms of advertising they cannot be turned off. Indeed in some communities billboard owners have succeeded in convincing local authorities to prohibit the screening of billboards from view from public rights-of-way. Optimal billboard locations are often the most intrusive on otherwise pristine views, diminishing the public enjoyment of the landscape.

The Society endorses the following actions:

1. National, state and local programs to control the placement of billboards.
2. Moratoriums on construction of new billboards along Interstate and federal aid highways and along major local transportation corridors.
3. Prohibition on the cutting of trees and vegetation along public rights-of-way to make billboards visible.
4. Prohibition on the establishment of restrictions on landscaping on public rights-of-way that might screen billboards.
5. The removal of nonconforming billboards with compensation provided through amortization
6. The establishment of comprehensive street graphics programs to ensure fairness to all advertisers and businesses while protecting the quality of the visual environment.

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